

KEEP YOUR KIDS

DRUG

ALCOHOL

THC

NICOTINE

JUUL®

LIQUOR

METH

VAPE

MARIJUANA

BOOZE

TOBACCO

POT

SUBSTANCE

FREE

PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

Taking others' prescription drugs is drug abuse,
and dangerous.

Know the Risks

Taking prescription drugs that are not prescribed for them, or taking more than prescribed, is a serious and growing problem. Because young people have been raised around open advertising of the benefits of prescription medications, some feel a false sense of security and do not consider them dangerous. After all, "they're prescribed by a doctor, so they must be safe." This is FALSE. While prescription drugs can be lifesaving when used as directed, they can be lethal used any other way. Without the oversight of a physician and pharmacist, they can interact with other medications or substances, can cause allergic reactions and can cause overdose. All of these can lead to death. Dependence and physical addiction can happen very rapidly. Young people need support and medical oversight to quit.

Know the Facts

- **This isn't just a problem "somewhere else."** In our region, **7% of 12th graders** admit they have abused prescription drugs.
- Despite the severe risks, **almost 10% of 12th graders in our region** did NOT consider misusing prescription drugs "wrong or very wrong."
- **Overdose and death rates are rising** across the country.
- **Benzodiazepines** (like Xanax, Valium and Klonopin), **pain medications** (like OxyContin, Hydrocodone and Percocet) and **stimulants** (like Ritalin, Vyvance and Adderall) are **all targets for abuse**.
- Young people often start abusing by trying to **self-medicate problems like insomnia or anxiety**.
- **Successful kids with no substance use history are also at risk.** Pressure to perform academically and in sports can drive them to these drugs for "more energy."
- For youth, the **most common source of prescription drugs is home**. The first step in prevention is to reduce access.
 - **Take an inventory** of any prescription drugs and know how many pills each has.
 - **Do not leave pill bottles** out in the open.
 - **Dispose of any unused pills** so they can't be found or ingested.

Focus on Prevention

Talk with your kids directly and make sure they understand that using anyone else's prescription medication or using more than prescribed of your own can be fatal. Whether they're experimenting in social situations or misusing these drugs to cope with feelings of anxiety, depression, insomnia or a need for increased energy, the dangers are the same. Let your kids know that if they are currently abusing prescription drugs, you're there to support them as they stop. Physical addiction can happen quickly and medical support is needed when quitting. Especially in rural areas, shame, stigma and a lack of privacy often stop people from admitting the problem. Reassure your kids that getting help to overcome substance use shows strength, not "bad character" or weakness.



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This project is funded in whole (\$20,000), from the Strategic Prevention Framework Partnerships for Success grant (#SP080988) from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration Center for Substance Abuse Treatment, subgranted through the Nebraska Department of Health and Services, Division of Behavioral Health.

All statistics taken from the 2018 Nebraska Risk and Protective Factor Student Survey (NRPFSS), Nebraska Region 4 results report, implemented under the Nebraska Student Health and Risk Prevention (SHARP) Surveillance System; the 2018 Youth Risk Behavior Survey Results and the 2017 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Youth Risk Behavior Survey.